individual Rural Household Direct Exchange lines (RDELs) in 1685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) in the country during the period 01.04.2005 and 31.03.2007.

(c) Out of a total of 2,647 SDCAs in the country, 1,685 SDCAs were identified for providing subsidy support, where the cost of providing RDELs was more than the revenue earned. The mode of subsidy was based on a front loaded payment and equated annual subsidy installments.

Waiting list for cellular connections

1862. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is long waiting list before BSNL for cellular connections;

(b) if so, the details thereof, circle-wise, till date;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this long waiting list is because of lack of handsets with the BSNL; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to resolve this and provide connections to the subscribers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, BSNL has a waiting list of 10,283 Cellular mobile connections as on 31st July, 2007 in North East-II Telecom Circle comprising of Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh States.

(c) No, Sir. The waiting list in North East-II Telecom Circle is due to non-availability of additional equipment capacity.

(d) BSNL has ordered GSM equipment for capacity addition of 80,000 lines in North East-II Circle to wipe out the long waiting list and to provide new connections. An Advance Purchase Order (APO) has already been issued to one of the successful bidder on 18.07.07. Unconditional acceptance of the APO will establish the price to enable issue of APO to other successful bidder. This will enable BSNL to provide more new connections to the subscribers.

Increasing subscriber base of BSNL

1863. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TEGHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of cellular subscriber base of BSNL *vis-a-vis* the major private operators between June 2004-July 2007;

(b) whether it is a fact that the BSNL subscriber base is dwindling over the period; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the corrective measures taken by Government?